EARLY TEXAS GRIGSBYS:
JOSEPH GRIGSBY AND GRIGSBY'S BLUFF
(1771 - 1841)

By Camellia Denys
1983

No pioneer was more highly respected than Joseph Grigsby. Certainly, he was considered one of the better educated and more cultured individuals living in the Texas of his day. He was the wealthiest citizen in Jefferson County at his death in 1841.**

Joseph was born in Loudoun County, Virginia, Sept. 24, 1771. He moved with his father, Nathaniel Grigsby, to Nelson County, Kentucky in 1786. Nathaniel received large grants of land, but settled on 1,000 acres at Bloomfield, near Bardstown. On an adjoining land grant lived Christopher Graham and wife, Isabella Mitchell. They moved from Augusta County, Virginia in 1791. Their eldest daughter, Sally Mitchell Graham was married to Joseph Grigsby in 1798.

Joseph and Sally lived in Nelson and Washington counties until 1815, when they sold their interest in the Nathaniel Grigsby plantation home and land. They moved west, to the newly formed Daviess County, and settled on a 390 acre plantation. The location was on Panther Run, near Owensboro on the Ohio River (Yellow Banks). In 1822 Joseph bought 1,000 acres on the rich delta lands of the Green River in Daviess County. With slave labor this developed into a prosperous cotton farm.

Some historians have erroneously written that Joseph Grigsby moved to Texas because of business failure. Research in the Daviess court records does not bear this out. He was in court several times to collect debts before leaving Kentucky in 1828. Joseph probably caught "Texas fever", like so many, and saw an opportunity for his family. It was said "the Grigsby's came from a place of plenty to a land of promise".

Joseph and Sally Grigsby were the parents of thirteen children. Two died young in Kentucky and two daughters married and remained in Daviess County. When fifty-seven years of age, Joseph moved his family in a caravan of wagons pulled by strong horses and oxen teams. Slaves and livestock accompanied the train. They settled in the Mexican province of Texas, Atoscocito District, Zavala Colony (later Jasper County). Early colonists with families were granted a League (4,428 acres) and a Labor (177 acres). Joseph Grigsby's land was located on Walnut Creek, a branch of the Neches River.

** "History of Jefferson County," W.T. Block (Nederland Publishing Co. 1976).

"Texas Riverman," William Seales (University of Texas Press, Austin 1966).

"Memories of George W. Armstrong," (Steck Co., Austin 1958).

His oldest son, Nathaniel Grigsby, as an unmarried man received ¼ league (1,107 acres) on the west side of the Neches River.

His eldest daughter, Susannah, was married to Ephraim Thompson and received a league of land on Sandy Creek, a branch of the Neches River.

His widowed daughter, Sally Grigsby Glenn, and her children were granted a League of land on Walnut Creek.

His daughter Frances and her husband, George W. Smyth, located their lands on Indian and Walnut Creeks. Smyth was hired by the Mexican government to survey the land grants. He played important roles in the Texas Revolution as a Delegate to the Convention and as a signer of the Declaration of Independence on March 2, 1836.

Joseph Grigsby was elected to represent Jefferson County as a delegate to the Second Congress in the young Republic of Texas as well as to the Third Congress in 1838, and to the Fifth Congress, serving until his death in 1841.

Joseph's two sons, Nathaniel and Enoch Grigsby, were volunteers in a Regiment at the "Siege of Bexar" in December of 1835. They were entitled to land in payment for their services.

Joseph Grigsby applied for a second League of land on the lower Neches River in Jefferson County, located only six miles from Sabin Pass, entrance to the Gulf of Mexico. This Grant is dated November 6, 1834, but it is probable that his son Nathaniel began cultivating the land before this date. Adjoining his land was Thomas F. McKinney with a Mexican Grant of 4,428 acres, but he never lived there. The location was known as McKinney Bluff because six huge Indian mounds elevated the river banks. In 1837, Joseph Grigsby bought two-thirds of the McKinney grant. He paid $6,172.00 for the 2,944 acres. This boosted his land holdings to 7,372 acres which were afterwards known as GRIGSBY'S BLUFF.

This location was ideal for building a plantation. The river provided fresh water and transportation for boats, and the high bluff assured safety from annual flooding. Grigsby sent his slaves to work with horses, leveling one of the mounds as the site for a home and barns. We have a descriptive account of the mounds published in 1841. Also, the Galveston Daily News published The Experiences of Captain Jack Caswell.

> Twelve miles below Beaumont, and six miles from Sabine Pass on the Neches River are six relics of Antiquity. They are about 20 feet high; 50 feet wide at the base and 200 feet long. Mr. Grigsby, upon whose plantation they are situated, leveled one for his house and barns. After digging through several layers of earth mixed with oyster, clam, and marine shells, he found an entire layer of human bones. There were large pan-shaped shells for holding water, and cooking shells with signs of fire on the bottom. Several perfect skeltons were buried in the bank. The men must have been seven feet tall, as we placed a bone from a lower leg by Captian Rabb who is six feet tall. The bone was six inches longer than his leg. We supposed that they were the flat-headed Indians as the skull

> turned straight back an inch above the eye socket and the head was a flat as a pancake.

It is known that the Attakapas tribe occupied the coast from the Neches River to Vermilion Bay in Louisiana. The shell mounds were not stratified geologically. They had accumulated for centuries, as the warriors brought dug-out loads of shell fish from Sabine Lake to eat at their home village. An earthen vase has been dated by Louisiana State University as over 1,000 years old, but no scientific archeological investigation was ever conducted.

Joseph Grigsby beautified the spot by planting live oak, mulberry, and pecan trees. Captain Caswell describes it, "this historic point called Grigsby's Bluff is one of the prettiest spots in the country. The bluff rises gradually, with beautiful shade trees covering the natural lawn. Fig trees line the river banks...."

We get a glimpse into the daily life of the Grigsby plantation from Annie Doom Pickrell in her Pioneer Women of Texas. A chapter is entitled, "Mrs. George W. Smyth, born Frances Mitchell Grigsby."

> Descendants of slave-holding people must frequently refute the suggestion that southern women knew little about real work. A vision of slaves always at hand conveys the idea of an ideal mistress. It is known, that in that home at Grigsby's Bluff, Master and Mistress and slave were all busy. Frances and her sisters were required to do a certain amount of work every day as it came. They carded both wool and cotton; spun the carded article into thread; and wove the thread into cloth to be used in clothing for the family and slaves. Six cuts of thread, Frances must card and spin each day. She must help too, with the cutting and sewing garments. Few slave women could be trusted to cut the precious cloth into garments, even for their own children....

The Neches River was a busy artery for barges and boats to transport freight and passengers to Sabine Pass and Galveston on the Gulf. A wharf and warehouses were built to service a station for side-wheeler boats. The first cotton in Southeast Texas was grown on Joseph Grigsby's plantation and shipped from Grigsby's Bluff landing. He also operated a horse driven sawmill at the Bluff. All this activity attracted some early settlers to this area.

Joseph Grigsby built the first horse-driven cotton gin in the town of Beaumont, a site he helped establish with four prominent Jefferson County citizens in 1837. Each gave an equal amount to lay out a plat which covered 200 acres. The company divided the property with boundary lines, designating and recording it in deeds as "the personal property of each partner". Other tracts of land not included in the private ownership were "set aside for public roads and commons". They layed out sites for the present Court House, City Hall, Library, Keith Park, Millard School, and the High School Campus. Beaumont became the seat of Jefferson County.

In the 1840 Census, Joseph Grigsby had title to 9,565 acres at Grigsby's Bluff as well as 155 lots in the town of Beaumont - also slaves, horses, cattle, sheep, and hogs. Later he acquired 1,475 acres of the valuable D. Gahagan Land Grant at

Mesquite point on the Sabine Pass. His son, Nathaniel Grigsby, is listed with 723 acres of land and 26 work horses at Grigsby's Bluff. An unmarried son of 35 years, Nathaniel was killed from the kick of a horse in September 1840. This was a disasterous blow to the Grigsby's Bluff operations since Nathaniel most probably acted as overseer of the plantation.

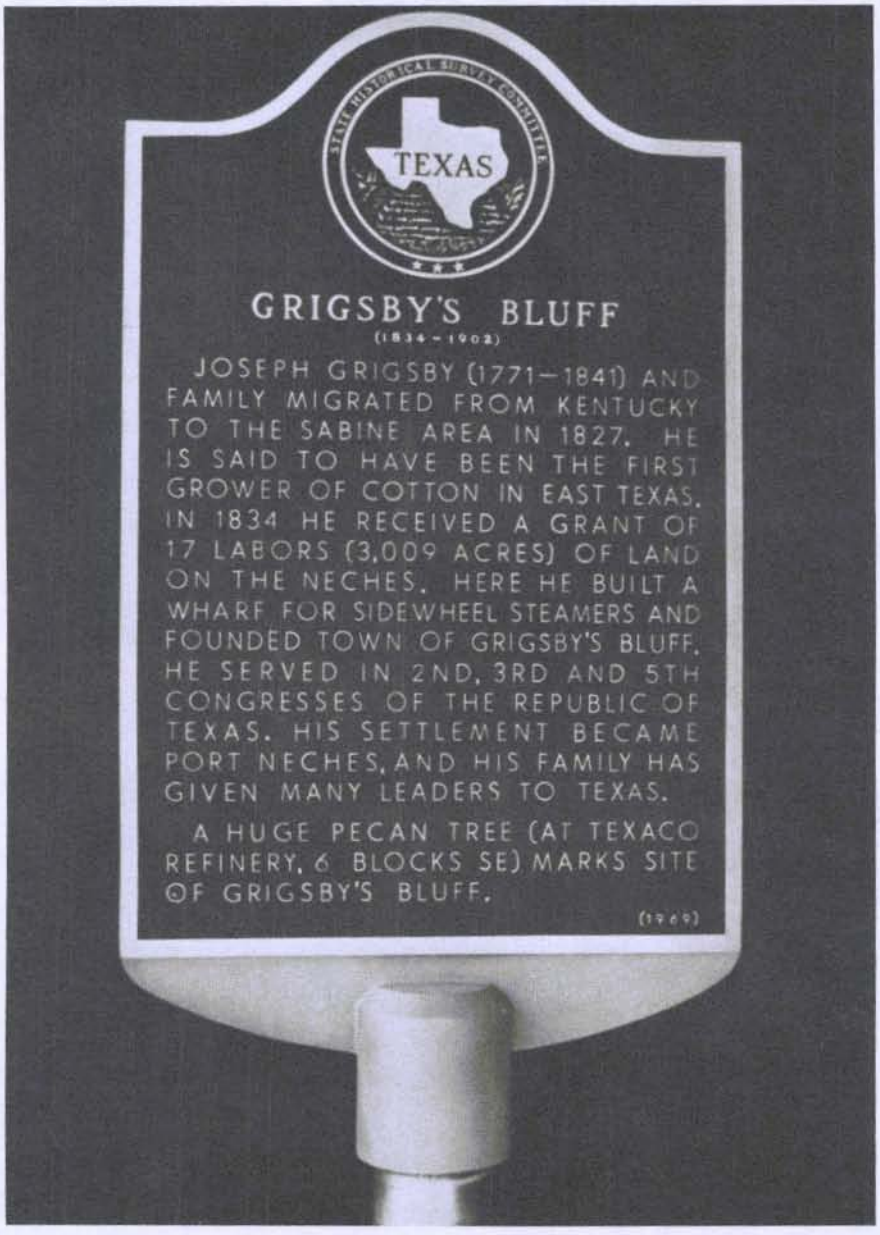
Joseph was nearly three score and ten years of age. He had interests from Jasper County on the north to Sabine Pass on the Gulf. He had to travel two hundred miles on horseback to attend Legislative duties at Austin, capitol of the Texas Republic. His health undoubtedly started to fail.

One year later, Joseph Grigsby made his last Will and Testament - a lengthy document. He willed "to my beloved wife, Sally Grigsby", and to his nine living children "...all my lands, slaves, horses, cattle, sheep and hogs". Three grandsons were singled out for gifts of land in Jasper County on Walnut Run and at Grigsby's Bluff. "I also give, bequeath and donate to my much esteemed and respected friend, William Eddy, my negro boy named Witten."

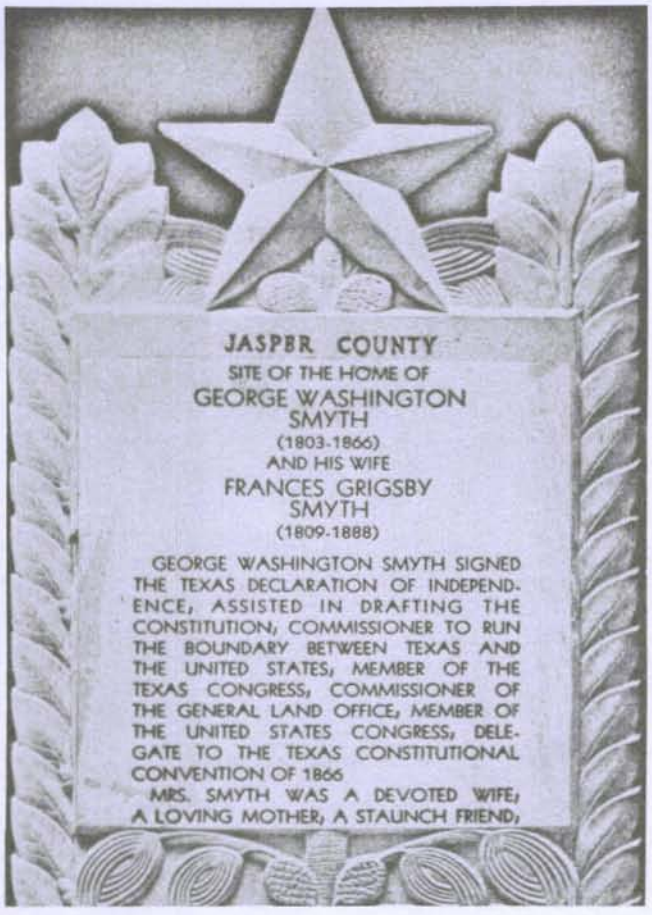
Joseph Grigsby died September 13, 1841, and was buried on his plantation at Grigsby's Bluff. His son-in-law, George W. Smyth, was named Executor of the estate. However, he could not obtain the excessive bond required by Texas statutes to administer an estate of such size. A special "enabling act" was passed by the Congress for his relief, exempting Smyth from the bond requirement.

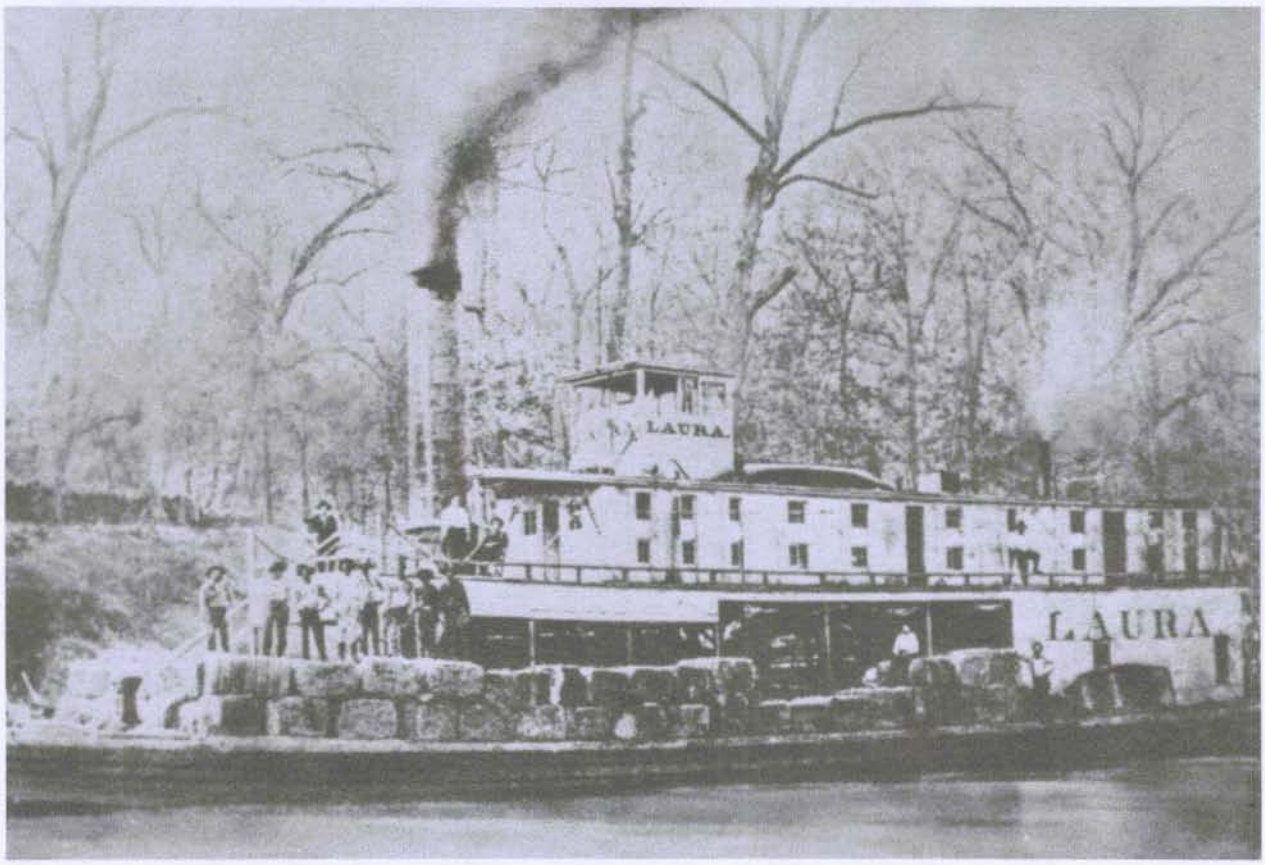
Joseph's widow, Sally Grigsby, moved back to Jasper County to live with her children. They were married and settled on lands too far away to oversee the plantation at Grigsby's Bluff. Under hired management, the fields and buildings deteriorated rapidly. Most of the lands and slaves were sold. The Grigsby descendants never lived at the Bluff again. THE DREAM OF EMPIRE WAS GONE WITH THE DEATH OF JOSEPH GRIGSBY!

After 1900 Grigsby's Bluff was acquired by Texaco Oil, Incorporated and Asphalt Plant. The name of the city built around the location was changed to Port Neches. Today, oil tankers steam up the river as far as Beaumont to load from refineries and transport all over the world. An official Texas Historical Marker was dedicated June 14, 1969 honoring Joseph Grigsby as founder of Grigsby's Bluff. The ceremony was sponsored by the Jefferson County Historical Committee, the descendants of Joseph Grigsby, and the officials of Port Neches. The City Council changed the name of the main street, running three miles through the City of Port Neches, to GRIGSBY DRIVE.


STATE HISTORICAL SURVEY COMMITTEE
TEXAS
GRIGSBY'S BLUFF
(1834 - 1902)
JOSEPH GRIGSBY (1771–1841) AND FAMILY MIGRATED FROM KENTUCKY TO THE SABINE AREA IN 1827. HE IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN THE FIRST GROWER OF COTTON IN EAST TEXAS. IN 1834 HE RECEIVED A GRANT OF 17 LABORS (3,009 ACRES) OF LAND ON THE NECHES. HERE HE BUILT A WHARF FOR SIDEWHEEL STEAMERS AND FOUNDED TOWN OF GRIGSBY'S BLUFF. HE SERVED IN 2ND, 3RD AND 5TH CONGRESSES OF THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS. HIS SETTLEMENT BECAME PORT NECHES, AND HIS FAMILY HAS GIVEN MANY LEADERS TO TEXAS.
A HUGE PECAN TREE (AT TEXACO REFINERY, 6 BLOCKS SE) MARKS SITE OF GRIGSBY'S BLUFF.
(1969)

FRANCES MITCHELL GRIGSBY
(Mrs. George W. Smyth)





The LAURA was a familiar sight on the Neches River. She transported freight and passengers to Sabine Pass and Galveston. Andrew F. Smyth was the Captain and part owner. He married Emily Allen, grand-daughter of JOSEPH GRIGSBY.

JOSEPH GRIGSBY, son of NATHANIEL GRIGSBY and ELIZABETH BUTLER; married June 28, 1771 in Bardstown, Kentucky to SARAH MITCHELL GRAHAM, daughter of CHRISTOPHER GRAHAM and ISABELLA MITCHELL. Sarah was born June 28, 1782 in Augusta County, Virginia. She died October 15, 1861 in Jasper County, Texas. Joseph Grigsby died at "Grigsby Bluff", Jefferson County, Texas, August 13, 1841.

JOSEPH and SARAH "Sally" GRIGSBY were the parents of thirteen children.

1. SUSANNAH GRIGSBY b. 12 Aug 1799 - Bloomfield, Nelson, Kentucky
   md 6 Feb 1817 - EPHRAIM THOMPSON
   d. - Oct 1849 - Tyler County, Texas

2. ISABELLA GRIGSBY b. 12 Dec 1800 - Bloomfield, Nelson, Kentucky
   md 28 Mar 1819 - JOHN HACKLEY PRIEST
   d. 2 Mar 1845 - Henderson County, Kentucky

3. NANCY GRIGSBY b. 12 Aug 1802 - Bloomfield, Nelson, Kentucky
   d. 15 Aug 1803 - Bloomfield, died infant

4. NANCY GRIGSBY b. 12 May 1804 - Bloomfield, Nelson, Kentucky
   md - BENJAMIN ALLEN
   d. Fall 1860 - Daviess County, Kentucky

5. NATHANIEL GRIGSBY b. 13 Dec 1805 - Washington County, Kentucky
   md - never married
   d. 9 Sep 1840 - "Grigsby Bluff", Jefferson, Texas

6. SARAH "Sally" GRIGSBY b. 1 Sep 1807 - Washington County, Kentucky
   md 24 Oct 1826 - DUKE GLENN
   (2) - NATHANIEL ALLEN
   d. 1 Sep 1885 - Jasper County, Texas

7. FRANCES MITCHELL GRIGSBY b. 13 Sep 1809 - Washington County, Kentucky
   md 1 Apr 1834 - GEORGE WASHINGTON SMYTH
   d. 5 Mar 1888 - Walnut Run, Jasper, Texas

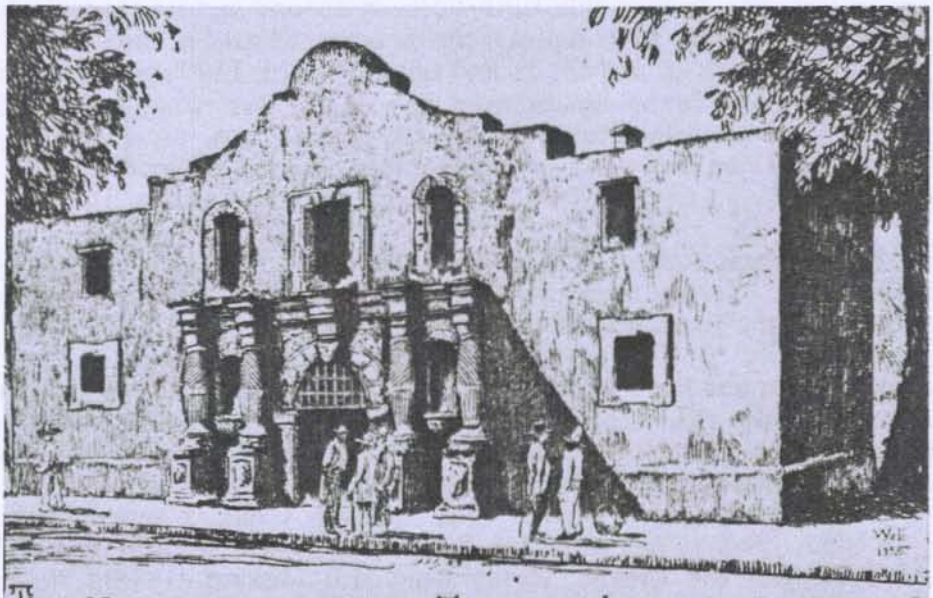
8. ELIZABETH GRIGSBY b. 7 Aug 1811 - Washington County, Kentucky
   md 17 Apr 1828 - JAMES GLENN
   d. 4 May 1873 - Jasper County, Texas

9. CHRISTOPHER C. GRIGSBY b. 9 Sep 1813 - Washington County, Kentucky
   d. 18 Sep 1823 - Daviess County, Kentucky

10. ENOCH GRIGSBY b. 17 Dec 1815 - Bloomfield, Nelson, Kentucky
    md - PRISCILLA HAYNES
    d. 16 Dec 1859 - Jasper County, Texas

11.	ANN MITCHELL	GRIGSBY	b.	12	Jan	1819	- Daviess County, Kentucky
			md	25	Feb	1836	- WILLIAM ALLEN
			d.	27	Oct	1863	- Jasper County, Texas
12.	WILLIAM	GRIGSBY	b.	15	Nov	1820	- Daviess County, Kentucky
			md				- FRANCES TOMLINSON
			d.	20	Feb	1864	- Jasper County, Texas
13.	MATILDA MARGARET GRIGSBY		b.	19	Aug	1823	- Daviess County, Kentucky
			md				- never married
			d.	19	Nov	1839	- "Grigsby Bluff", Jefferson, Texas

Col. William B. Travis
and the
Fall of the Alamo



The Alamo, San Antonio, Texas, where died on March 6, 1836, its defenders to the last man. "Remember the Alamo" became the battlecry at San Jacinto.

"Gone to Texas"

We did not invent Texas
We only inherited it.

"GONE TO TEXAS"

by Camellia T. Denys

Between 1823 and 1850, the letters G.T.T. scrawled on empty houses meant that the occupants had "Gone to Texas" or to use another expression, they had "contracted Texas Fever". The man of the house and his family had simply heard the siren call of the West, with its promise of a new beginning and opportunity.

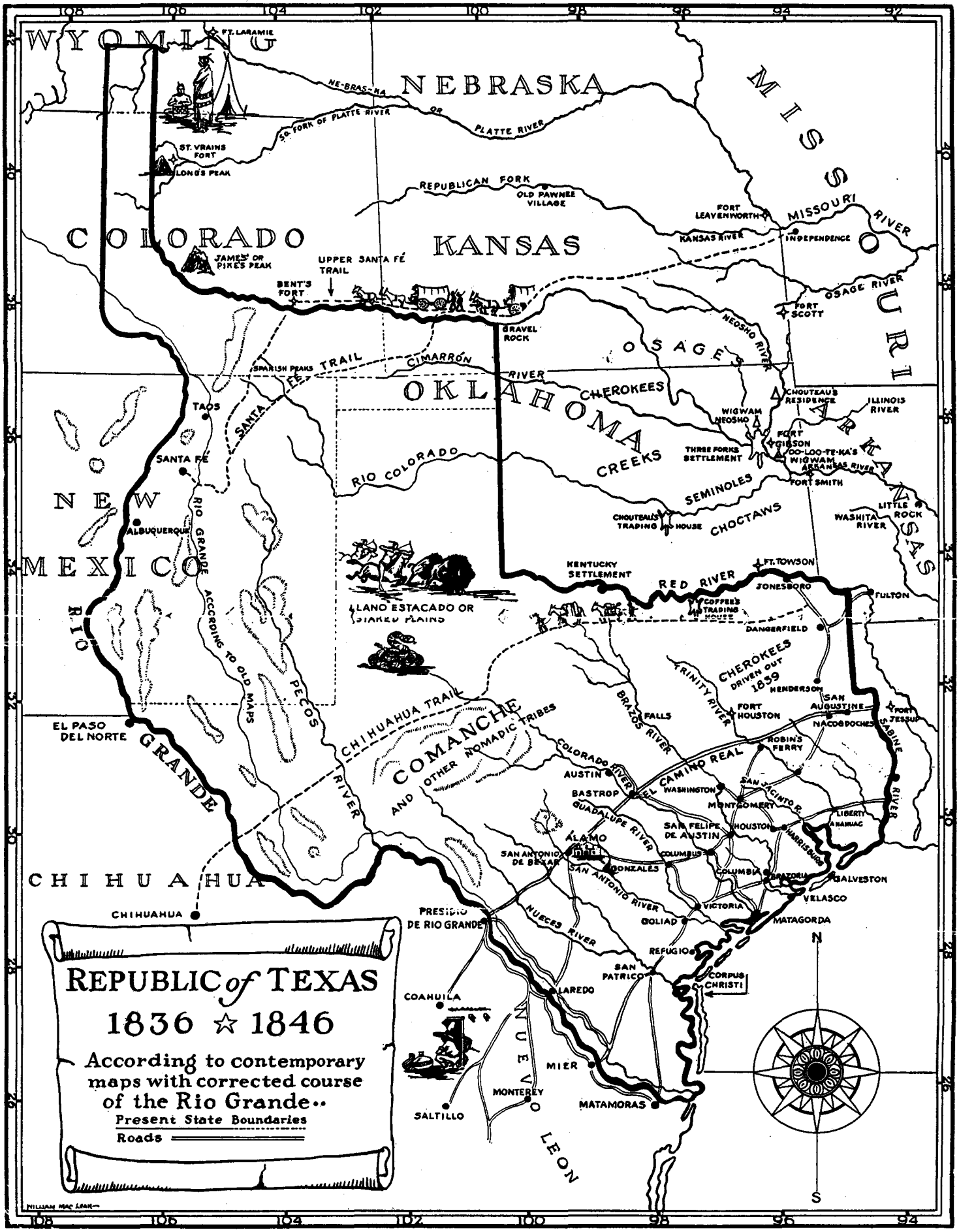
Although most immigrants came from the southern United States, the effects of Texas Fever and G.T.T. could have been written on countless doors in the northern states and in Europe. This colonization coincided with one of the greatest periods of migration in history. During this time western Europe and its New World descendants moved in a mighty rush to complete the process of filling the empty parts of the world. The revolutions in the 1830's and famine in the 1840's started the stream from Europe to America. Texas represented one of the last places for the land-hungry where arable land was plentiful and virtually free. Thus, the rush to populate Texas was not only a part of the westward movement, but an episode in the closing of the Great Frontier.

In 1850 General Robert E. Lee was garrisoned in Texas to protect the settlers from Indian raids. Gazing over the plains, he thoughtfully remarked to a companion, "I am thinking of the footsteps of the coming millions".

Moses Austin and his son, Stephen, were successful business men from Missouri. They established the first settlement of 300 pioneers in the heart of Texas in 1821. Visionary colonizer-capitalist, Moses is known as the Father of Texas. Stephen had an obsession to redeem the wilderness by means of the plow. He had no notion of taking the land away from Mexico until he was unjustly imprisoned for eighteen months in 1835. Had it not been for the massacre at the Alamo, the Battle of San Jacinto (1836), and the United States war with Mexico (1848), Texas would have remained a part of Latin America. The defeat of Santa Anna was one of the decisive battles of history. The Treaty of Hidalgo, signed February 2, 1848 changed ownership of more land than any treaty in United States history.

Some of the first immigrants to Texas were the Daniel Boone's of the American frontier - grim, tough men eternally moving west to new land. They chose to live in "splendid isolation" on the fringes of civilization, exposed to the fierce Comanche and Cherokee Indians and primitive pioneer life. They built the first forts which served as the only protection to the growing settlements. They too were victims of many Indian raids.

The Mexican Province of Texas also attracted many bright United States citizens who saw an opportunity for their future prosperity: Samuel Houston, past Governor of Tennessee; William B. Travis and James B. Bonham, young attorneys from South Carolina and Alabama, and many others became the leaders and generals in the war for independence. Among the fifty-nine men signing the Declaration of Independence from Mexico, seven had served in the Congress of the United States. George Childress, author of the document, had a ready-made model, penned by Thomas Jefferson sixty years before. He only changed words and details to fit the time and place.


WYOMING
NEBRASKA
COLORADO
KANSAS
OKLAHOMA
NEW MEXICO
CHIHUAHUA
MISSOURI
ARKANSAS
FT. LARAMIE
NE-BRAS-KA
SO. FORK OF PLATTE RIVER
OR
PLATTE RIVER
ST. VRAINS FORT
LONG'S PEAK
REPUBLICAN FORK
OLD PAWNEE VILLAGE
FORT LEAVENWORTH
MISSOURI RIVER
KANSAS RIVER
INDEPENDENCE
JAMES' OR PIKE'S PEAK
UPPER SANTA FÉ TRAIL
BENT'S FORT
OSAGE RIVER
FORT SCOTT
NEOSHO RIVER
GRAVEL ROCK
SPANISH PEAKS
SANTA FÉ TRAIL
CIMARRÓN RIVER
CHEROKEES
CHOUTEAU'S RESIDENCE
ILLINOIS RIVER
WIGWAM NEOSHO
FORT GIBSON
THREE FORKS SETTLEMENT
CREEKS
CO-LOO-TE-KA'S WIGWAM
ARKANSAS RIVER
FORT SMITH
TAOS
SANTA FÉ
RIO COLORADO
SEMINOLES
CHOUTEAU'S TRADING HOUSE
CHOCTAWS
LITTLE ROCK
WASHITA RIVER
ALBUQUERQUE
RIO GRANDE
KENTUCKY SETTLEMENT
RED RIVER
FT. TOWSON
JONESBORO
FULTON
LLANO ESTACADO OR STAKED PLAINS
COFFEE'S TRADING HOUSE
DANGERFIELD
ACCORDING TO OLD MAPS
PECOS
CHEROKEES DRIVEN OUT 1839
TRINITY RIVER
HENDERSON
SAN AUGUSTINE
FORT HOUSTON
NACOGDOCHES
FORT JESSUP
SABINE RIVER
BRAZOS RIVER
FALLS
EL PASO DEL NORTE
RIO GRANDE
CHIHUAHUA TRAIL
COMANCHE AND OTHER NOMADIC TRIBES
COLORADO RIVER
EL CAMINO REAL
ROBIN'S FERRY
AUSTIN
BASTROP
WASHINGTON
SAN JACINTO R.
MONTGOMERY
LIBERTY
GUADALUPE RIVER
SAN FELIPE DE AUSTIN
HOUSTON
HARRISBURG
ALAMO
SAN ANTONIO DE BEXAR
COLUMBUS
GONZALES
COLUMBIA
BRAZORIA
GALVESTON
SAN ANTONIO RIVER
VELASCO
VICTORIA
PRESIDIO DE RIO GRANDE
NUECES RIVER
GOLIAD
MATAGORDA
REFUGIO
SAN PATRICIO
CORPUS CHRISTI
LAREDO
COAHUILA
NUEVO LEON
MIER
MONTERREY
MATAMORAS
SALTILLO
N
S
REPUBLIC of TEXAS
1836 ☆ 1846
According to contemporary maps with corrected course of the Rio Grande..
Present State Boundaries
Roads
WILLIAM MAC LEAN
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100
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96
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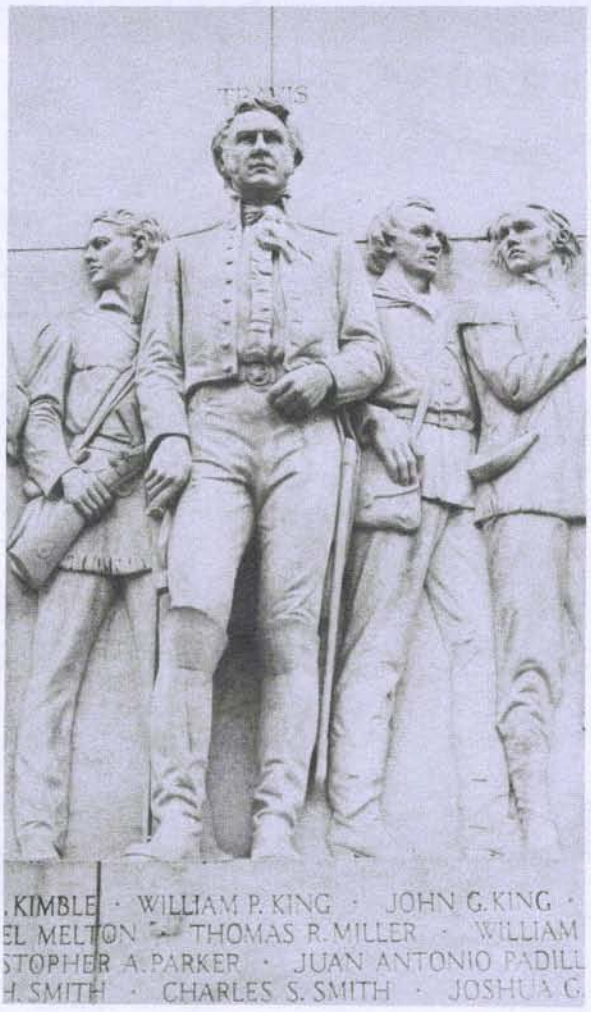


Col. William B. Travis
1809 ~ 1836

James Butler Bonham
1807 ~ 1836

WILLIAM B. TRAVIS AND THE FALL OF THE ALAMO

by Camellia T. Denys

Four military events highlight the history of Texas independence from Mexico. William B. Travis is credited with firing the first shot that started the revolution against Spanish rule. Travis, an aggressive young lawyer from Alabama, lived in Anahuac on the Gulf Coast of Texas. Colonel John D. Blackburn, Commander of the garrison, put Anahuac under martial law and ordered that no more settlers be allowed in the Province of Texas. He imprisoned two Mexican officials charging them with assisting American colonists to enter the territory. June 29, 1835, William Travis was chosen the leader, and with a group of men put a small cannon aboard the sloop "Ohio", and fired a single shot hitting the fort. Travis boldly commanded Captain Tenorio to surrender with 250 Mexican soldiers, then paroled them with orders to leave the fort and march to San Antonio. General Cos, Commander-in-chief of the Mexican military forces in Texas, ordered Travis and four American men to be arrested and confined to the fort in Anahuac. The colonists gathered 100 men and captured a detachment of Mexican dragoons and demanded the release of Travis. This event aroused the American spirit and started the revolution.

In September, 1835, Stephen F. Austin was released from 18 months of imprisonment in Mexico City. While on a diplomatic mission, Austin had been confined by the President and was refused any conversation with him. Austin had tried to get the Mexican government to honor the original agreement with the colonists in Texas. When Austin returned from Mexico everyone turned to him and asked would it be war or peace? His answer was, "independence is only recourse". Texans stood united but ill prepared.

Moses and Stephen Austin had founded a colony of 300 at San Felipe in 1821. It was first formed with recruits in defense of the Indians. He organized an executive committee composed of representatives for safety and communication called the "Permanent Council". This was the only government in Texas in 1835. Delegates were chosen from different areas and a quorum arrived on November the third. Their first issue was to proclaim independence from Mexico.

Storm clouds were gathering on the horizon. By December 1835, it was well known that Santa Anna would lead an army into Texas to subdue the rebellious spirit of the colonists. What about the fort at Bexar in San Antonio? The Texans knew it was the "key" to control the Province. A troop of colonists under the command of "Old Ben Milam" lead them to San Antonio and surrounded the fort for three days. General Cos was compelled to surrender on December the tenth. His Mexican army of 800 men was ordered to march under parole across the Rio Grande River - the terms of the parole being that he would never again take up arms against Texas. Now, the Province was practically free of Mexican soldiers and rule. This event is known as the "Siege of Bexar" in Texas history. But as the victory of the fort was secured "Old Ben Milam" was killed. NATHANIEL and ENOCH, sons of Joseph Grigsby, participated as volunteers at the "Siege of Bexar" at San Antonio in December, 1835.

William Travis moved from Anahuac to San Felipe, formed a law partnership, and was commissioned Lieutenant Colonel of Calvary. On December 24, 1835, he was assigned to recruit men, horses, and supplies for a Texas army. James Butler Bonham arrived in Texas from Alabama on December twelfth. He was inducted in the Cavalry as a Lieutenant and assigned with his cousin, William Travis. Bonham and Travis were both born in Red Banks, Edgefield County, South Carolina. They were closely associated in Alabama, where they practiced law. Sam Houston, known for his relations with the Cherokee Indians and the U.S. government, was impressed with James Bonham. He wrote to J.W. Robinson saying, "Bonham ought to be made a major by all means. His influence in the army will be great".

The "Permanent Council" at San Felipe proceeded to organize a provisional government. It was to have a two-fold nature, providing for both civil and military organization: Henry Smith was elected Governor with Sam Houston as Major-General of the Texas army. Stephen Austin was appointed as agent to the United States, to try to negotiate loans and induce other assistance.

Bexar at San Antonio became the key to the situation in Texas. If Santa Anna could retake it, he could easily make inroads all the way to the Sabine River. Goliad was also a Fort occupied by a Texas garrison uner Colonel James Fannin. The Mexicans likewise, looked on Bexar and Goliad as their keys to Texas. In the meantime, General Cos, with his defeated army of 800 men, arrived in Laredo. Santa Anna, across the Rio Grande at Saltillo, was in a rage to see the humiliation of the Mexican army being run out of Texas. He ignored the parole terms aned ordered General Cos to rest, recruit and equip his army. "Return to your post at Bexar and redeem your reputation, if you can."

Santa Anna reached Laredo February 12, 1836, and rested four days, waiting for all the troops to assemble. Here he formed the policy to be pursued in Texas, when it was conquered:

1. All leaders and promoters of the Revolution to be executed.
2. All expense for putting down the insurrection, including past due custom duties, shall be paid by confiscation of the property of Texans.
3. All foreigners living on the sea coast, who had not participated in the rebellion shall be removed to the interior.
4. All foreigners who came since 1828 as part of an armed force shall be regarded as pirates and punished as such.
5. All grants of land shall be vacated, and the land divided among the Mexican soldiers; but no Anglo-American will be permitted to settle in Texas. The French, English and Germans can buy land for $1.00 an acre.
6. All negroes shall be liberated and declared free.

Santa Anna was determined to march over land from Laredo to San Antonio and establish control at this vantage point. Colonel James Bowie with 30 men left for Bexar on January 17, 1836. James Bonham accompanied him.

Lieutenant Colonel William Travis was ordered to take command of the fort at the Alamo. Travis asked Governor Smith to relieve him of the orders, pointing out that Colonel James Bowie was at the post at Bexar. But the governor did not grant

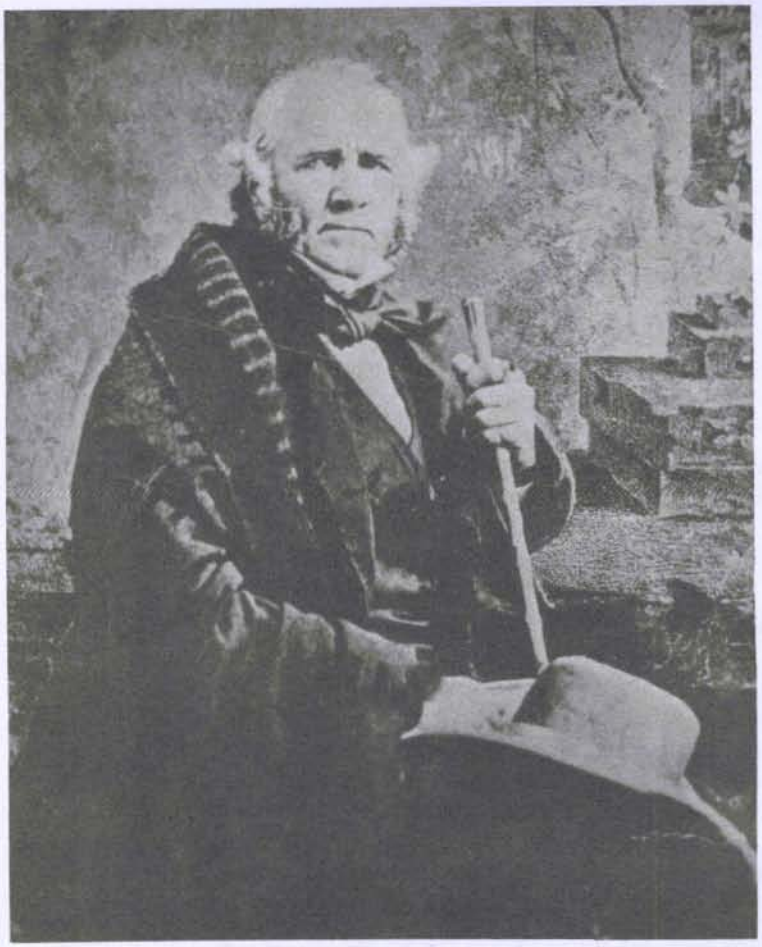
his request or answer his letter. Travis, like the good soldier and true patriot that he was, marched with his troops, reaching San Antonio on February 3, 1836. Colonel David Crockett, with twelve Tennessee men arrived at the Alamo on February 8th with orders from General Sam Houston to abandon and blow up the fort; but not one of the military authorities would carry out the act. However indifferent or reluctant before goling to Bexar, once there, they wrote to the governor, the council, the commander-in-chief, saying "Bexar is the key - public safety demands our lives, rather than surrender it into the hands of the enemy." The officers made the decision to hold the fort against all odds. A small band of resolute men assembled for the defense.

As of February 12, 1836, Santa Anna had 2500 men at Saltillo and 2000 at Rio Grande under the command of General Sesma. Travis wrote a letter to Governor H. Smith of Texas requesting help of 200 men to assure the support and survival of Bexar. Many letters requesting aid went out by carrier to the Governor, but the most heroic document in American history is the letter dated February 24, 1836 in which Travis told about the conditions of the Alamo. It reads as follows:

> To the People of Texas and All Americans in the world - Fellow Citizens and Compatriots: I am besieged with a thousand or more of the Mexican under Santa Anna. I have sustained a continual Bombardment and cannonade for 24 hours and have not lost a man. The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword if the fort is taken. I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, and our flag still waves proudly from the walls. I shall never surrender or retreat. Then, I call upon you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism and everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid with all dispatch. The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily and will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due his own honor and that of his country. VICTORY or DEATH.
>
> William Barret Travis
> Lt. Col. Comdt.
>
> P.S. The Lord is on our side. When the enemy appeared in sight we had not three bushels of corn. We have since found in deserted houses 80 to 90 bushels and got into the walls 20 or 30 head of Beeves.

On the 28th of February, 300 men and four guns left for Bexar under James Fannin. Unfortunately, just a couple hundred yards out from Goliad, one of the wagons broke down. Fannin decided to turn back and hold a council of war to discuss the possibility of relieving Travis at Bexar. The outcome was to return to Golaid instead of Bexar.

James (Jim) Bonham, courier for Texas, returned to the Alamo on the morning of March 3, 1836 with grim news that no help was coming. Bonham, Travis's cousin, had tied a white handkerchief to his hat as a signal to the men at the fort not to shoot him. He rode upon a white horse that was darkened by sweat. There were two other carriers with Bonham, but they refused to go through the enemy lines. Bonham



GOVERNOR OF TENNESSEE
ADOPTED SON OF CHEROKEE CHIEF
COMM. GENERAL OF TEXAS ARMY
BATTLE OF SAN JACINTO (1836)
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS
UNITED STATES SENATOR (1846–1859)
GOVERNOR OF TEXAS (1859–1861)
STRONGLY OPPOSED TEXAS SECCESSION FROM THE UNION IN THE CIVIL WAR

SAM HOUSTON
by Frederick of New York City, made in 1856 when was a member of the United States Senate.

Sam Houston

spurred his horse and said "I will make my report to Travis or die in the attempt." Bonham was to never leave the Alamo again. The last message that Travis wrote was sent by "faithful scout", John W. Smith, to the President of the Convention, since the Governor had no power - the council never had a quorum after January 18, and Sam Houston was on furlough. Travis's last plea for reinforcements and detailed information on the Mexican army was specific.

> "A reinforcement of about one thousand men is now entering Bexar from the west, and I think it more than probable that Santa Anna is now in town, from the rejoicing we hear . . . We have provisions for twenty days for the men we have. Our supply of ammunitions is limited . . . . The power of Santa Anna is to be met here or in the colonies; we had better meet them here than to suffer a war of devastation to rage in our settlements . . . . The enemy's troops are still arriving, and the reinforcements will probably amount to two or three thousand."

Santa Anna had 4,000 men outside the fort surrounding Travis and his men. He ordered several charges against the walls of the fort and suffered severe losses. Travis's artillery responded with deadly revenge and was able to hold off the army for a short time according to Francisco Ruiz, eyewitness to the massacre at the Alamo. "They poured over like sheep." Texans were using rifles, swords, bare hands and anything else they could scramble to find as a weapon. The Mexicans swarmed inside the fort.

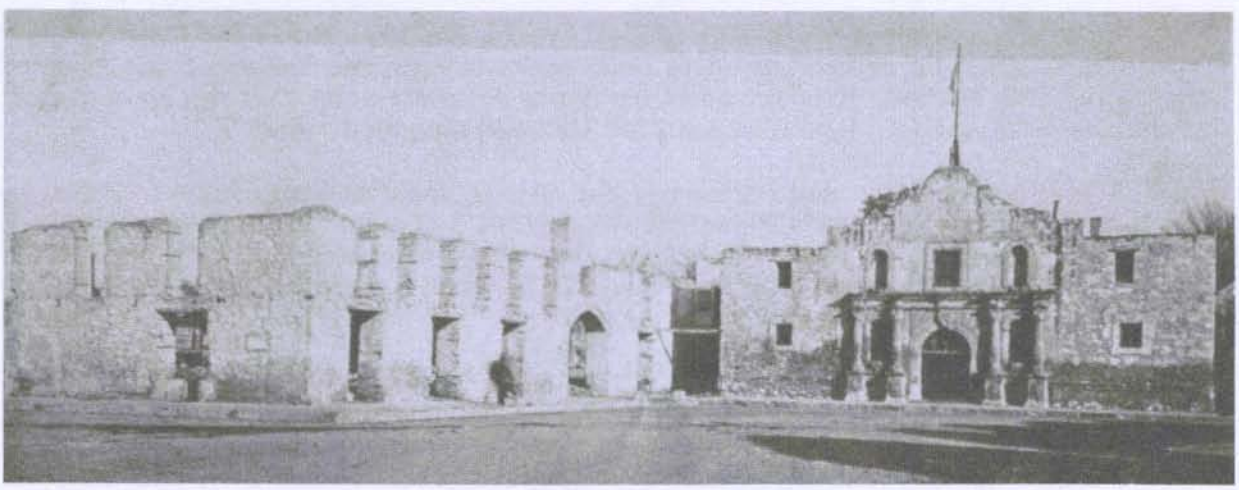
"On the north battery of the fortress convent, lay the lifeless body of Col. Travis on the gun carriage, shot only through the forehead. Toward the west and in a small fort opposite the city, we found the body of Colonel Crockett. Col. Bowie was found dead in his bed in one of the rooms on the south side." Bonham's body was slumped over a cannon, dead.

Santa Anna ordered the bodies of Col. Travis, Bonham, Bowie and Crockett laid before him. Then he ordered wood to be brought to burn the bodies of one hundred and eighty-two Texans. It is stated in the Santa Anna Memoirs that the final assault at the Alamo lasted four hours, where 2000 Mexican men died.

After the massacre and capture of the Alamo, General Santa Anna marched to the fort at Golaid and killed Colonel Fannin and his 300 men. Santa Anna wanted to clean the Texan soil of Anglo-Americans, and started a sweep towards the Sabine River. The colonists were very scared of Santa Anna's plans of destruction. Many families loaded up wagons and tried to cross the Sabine River to safety. This is known as the "run away scrape".

Sam Houston had called for all his Captains and volunteers to make a last stand. His plan was to retreat eastward into the Bayou Country where the Mexican heavy armory and wagons would bog down. Santa Anna and 4,000 men were encamped on the San Jacinto River, confident that the rebellious Texans would be easily annihilated. Before day break on April 21, 1836, the Texans had surrounded the Mexican encampment. With cries of "Remember the Alamo" and "Remember Golaid" they attacked. The battle of San Jacinto was over in 18 minutes. Santa Anna was captured and brought before Sam Houston, who was lying under an oak tree with a ball in his ankle. Santa Anna was marched to New Orleans to be tried for treason and returned to Mexico. As Supreme Commander and President, he never gave up

harassing the Texans. Texas became a Republic from April 21, 1836 to December 1845 when they were admitted to the United States.



Editor's Note: See pages 32 and 335 for more information on William B. Travis's Grigsby relationship.

"TEXAS JOHN" GRIGSBY c. 1787 - 1841

by Margaret G. Mottley

I have read that the initials "G.T.T.", standing for "Gone to Texas", were found fairly often in legal records back before 1836, when Texas became a state. Apparently many people came to the Republic to escape debts and back taxes. There was also the lure of cheap land offered to those who would come and settle here. We hope land is what attracted our John Grigsby to come here with his family from Illinois in 1834, since there was a widespread depression in this country at that time.

"Texas John" Grigsby had several claims to fame, according to various columns that have appeared in the Dallas News over the years. One was his Headright for a league and a labor of land (4605 acres) located in what is now the heart of Dallas, Texas. If you are familiar with that city, the area is bounded roughly "from Turtle Creek in Oak Lawn to the Fairgrounds, and from Henderson in East Dallas to Akard in Downtown Dallas" (Dallas Morning News, Sam Acheson, May 2, 1966).

The second "claim to fame" was the record number of defendants, more than 400, in the lengthy lawsuit concerning the inheritance rights of the children of John Grigsby by his second wife, Louisa Thompson Grigsby.

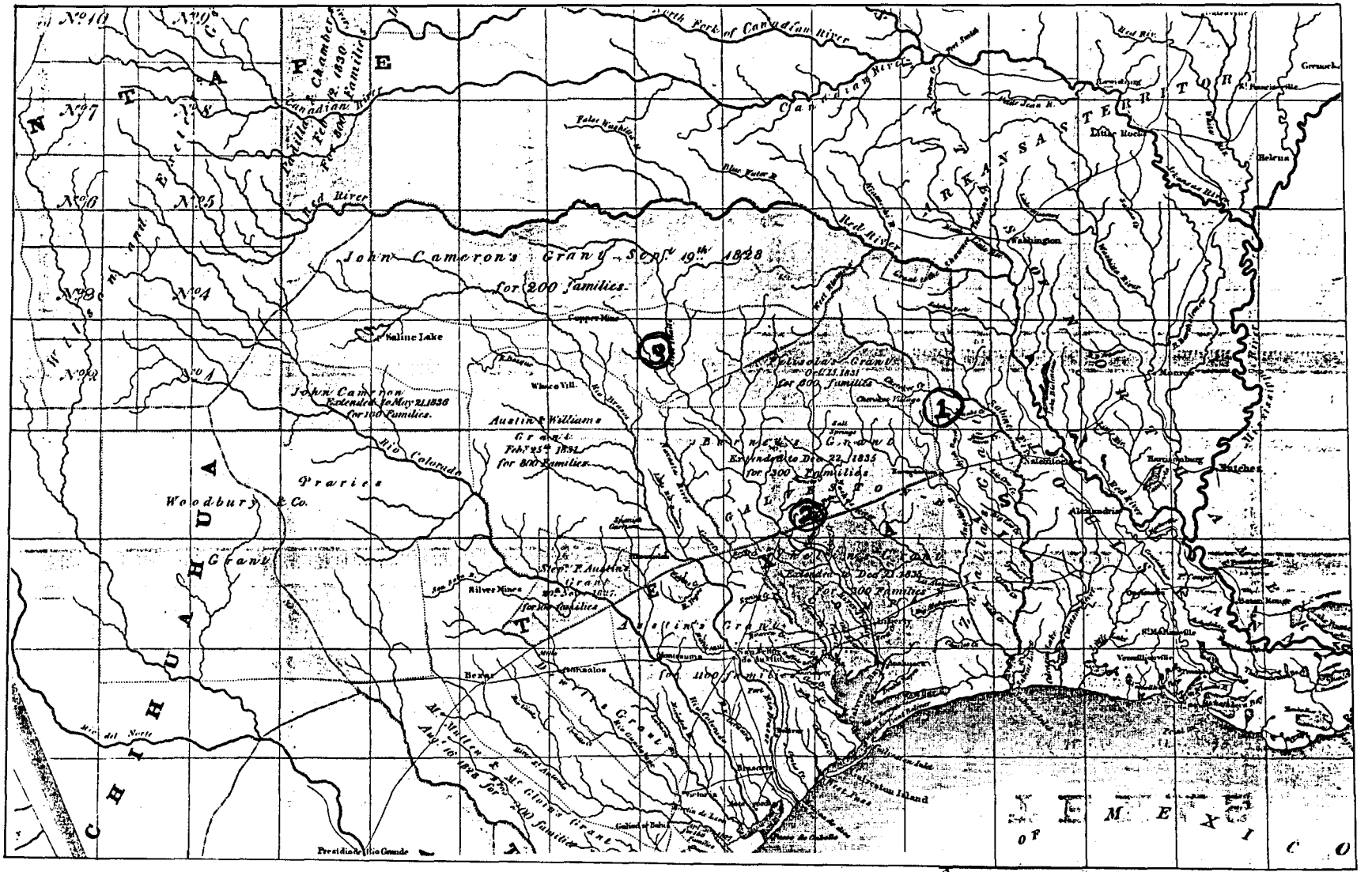
His third "claim to fame" is that he is the first known casualty of commercial navigation on the Trinity River. In March of 1841, while taking a barge-load of cotton to Galveston to market, he fell off and drowned - not a desirable way to become famous. We do not know if his body was recovered from the river.

The earliest proven date on this John Grigsby is that of his marriage to Hester Sharp on 15 April, 1817 in Harrison Co., Indiana. At that time he was about 30 years old. John and Hester had 8 children, probably all born in Indiana: Elizabeth, Crawford, William, John, Ruth Ann, Benjamin & James (twins), and Robert Hinds. Hester Sharp Grigsby died in Harrison County after 1831.

In December of 1833, John Grigsby married Eliza(beth) Louisa Thompson in Crawford County, Illinois.

Elder Daniel Parker, also of Crawford County, early in 1832 "had a vision, in which he thought the Lord called him to establish a new church in Texas. I feel that this vision could have been the result of the depression sweeping the country at this time, or by the promise of free land in Texas" (Jack Martin Lagow, writing about Thomas Lagow, another Dallas Headright owner - 1962). By 1834, Parker had received permission from Republic of Texas officials to bring his Pilgrim (Baptist) Church of the Predestinarian Faith to Texas. He had been advised to bring an organized colony, and apparently John Grigsby and his family came with them, even though John and Louisa did not join the church until later in Texas. This group entered Texas by way of Logansport, Louisiana. John, Eliza Louisa, and the eight children were enumerated in the Teneha Community or District in The First Census of Texas, 1829-1836 (Marion Day Mullins - State Genealogy Library, Austin, Texas).

Most of the Elder Parker's group had settled around San Pedro creek and in the Elkhart (Anderson Co.) area. John Grigsby's family later lived on the north side of



1833 Map of Texas

1. Teneha Community - where John Grigsbyfamily was counted in the first Texas Census

2. San Pedro Creek - Site of the Edens Massacre

3. Area which became Dallas

San Pedro Creek, across from the family of John Edens (see related story on the Edens Family Massacre).

Mrs. Balis Gene Dailey Shoultz, great-granddaughter of Ruth Ann Grigsby (Edens), has put together the following chronology of events in the life of John Grigsby in Texas from 1834-1841:

1834 - arrived in Texas in October at Teneha Settlement
1836 - he and Eliza(beth) Louisa joined Old Pilgrim Church on 6 February (minutes of Church Conference - Isaac Parker, clerk)
Jury duty in Nacogdoches
1837 - lived in Nacogdoches County, elected County Clerk of newly-formed Houston County in September (formed from Nacogdoches Co.) Until 1839, was clerk of Old Pilgrim Church. Living on San Pedro Creek, 12 or 13 miles NE of Crockett, Texas.
1838 - Emeline Grigsby born in Houston County.
Edens Massacre in October
1840 - Daniel Birtt Grigsby born in Shelby County
1841 - drowned in Trinity River while taking a load of cotton to Galveston.

After John's death, in 1842 Louisa married Balis Edens in Houston County. They had one daughter, Maria Louisa Edens. Then, on 13 June 1843, Louisa Grigsby Edens died.

After Louisa's death, Balis Edens married Ruth Ann Grigsby (daughter of John and Hester Grigsby). Balis and Ruth Ann had in their household James* and Robert Grigsby, Ruth Ann's younger brothers; Emeline and Daniel Britt Grigsby, children of John and Louisa; and Maria Louisa, daughter of Louisa and Balis Edens. Eventually, Balis and Ruth Ann had 8 children of their own.

Apparently John Grigsby never even laid eyes on the Dallas land. His headright, number 34 granted in Nacogdoches by the Houston County Commissioners, was the league and labor promised by law to a married man living in Texas before it became a state. William and Crawford each had 640 acres in the same area, and Crawford received an extra 320 for his participation in the Battle of San Jacinto.

The area of Texas that is now Dallas County was inhabited by several different Indian tribes and it was dangerous for white men to travel or attempt to settle there. William and Crawford finally went there in 1842, after their father's death, to survey the land the family held. During John's lifetime, he and Louisa had sold about 1321 acres of his survey, leaving 3284 acres for his estate. Neither John nor Louisa left a will, so in 1848 partition of their joint estate was begun.

It was not a simple matter, since there were three "families" involved: the 7 children of John and Hester Grigsby, 2 children of John and Louisa Grigsby, and 1 child of Louisa Grigsby Edens and Balis Edens. The first partition gave each of John Grigsby's 9 children a 1/9 share.

---

*James's twin, Benjamin, apparently died soon after they came to Texas.

Under Texas law, Louisa should have received ½ of her husband's estate and the other half should have been divided among his children. She had died in 1843, before the partition.

In 1874, a suit was filed in Dallas County, claiming that the inheritance rights of Daniel Britt Grigsby and Maria Louisa Edens had not been included (Emeline Grigsby had died). Since the acreage had been divided and resold in many small parcels, the suit involved more than 400 defendants, trying to gain clear title to their land. Many defendants reached an out-of-court settlement, but the lawsuits went all the way to the U. S. Supreme Court. Final settlement came in 1892, with the Supreme Court upholding the community estate laws of Texas. By the decision, Daniel Britt Grigsby and Maria Louisa Edens were each entitled to 1/3 of their mother's ½ share of John Grigsby's estate (we do not know if Emeline's heirs received her 1/3 share).

There have been several articles about this lawsuit in Dallas newspapers over the years because of its complexity, the number of land titles involved, and the years of litigation required to clear these titles. Headrights such as John Grigsby received were granted by the Republic of Texas to encourage people to move there. In a speech in September, 1964, Joe Irion Worsham (a member of the Sons of the Republic of Texas) said that the lawsuit "...settled the population problem. Men started coming to Dallas from everywhere. They were lawyers."

* * * *

John Grigsby's descendants lived in the East Texas area, primarily in Anderson CountY.

ELIZABETH GRIGSBY (1818-1899) married Marcus P. Mead in Anderson County. They had 4 children, James, Anna, Eve, and Kate. In 1840 Elizabeth's brothers, James and Robert, were living with them, and apparently children from a previous marriage of Marcus Mead. Marcus died in 1860. The 1860 census shows Elizabeth as head of household and lists her occupation as farmer.

CRAWFORD GRIGSBY (ca 1819-1847) was in the Texas Army and fought at the Battle of San Jacinto. For this service he received 640 acres of land plus an additional 320 for being in the Battle of San Jacinto. His name appears on the monument at the San Jacinto Battleground as John Crawford Grigsby. He served in Capt. Hayden Arnold's Company of the Nacogdoches Volunteers. Crawford Grigsby never married and when he died in 1847 he left his estate to his six surviving brothers and sisters.

WILLIAM GRIGSBY (ca 1822-1848) married Elizabeth Bennett in 1844. They had 2 children John and Mary Faith. After William's death in 1848, Elizabeth married Bannister Edens, brother of Balis Edens. They had 4 children.

JOHN GRIGSBY (1825-1848) married Margaret C. Moore in 1846. He was the first County Clerk (or Probate Clerk) of Anderson County. After his death (Margaret) Catherine Grigsby married John Hemby. No information available about children.

RUTH ANN GRIGSBY (ca 1826-1884) married Balis Edens after the death of his first wife, Louisa Thompson Grigsby Edens (she was Ruth Ann's stepmother). They helped raise Robert and James Grigsby, Ruth Ann's younger brothers, as well as Emeline and Daniel Britt Grigsby (children of John and Louisas Grigsby), and Maria Louisa Edens, daughter of Louisa and Balis Edens. Ruth Ann and Balis Edens had 8 children of their own: Benjamin Franklin, John Randolph, Lucinda Elizabeth, Isaac Newton, Elizabeth Luvinia, Sarah Josephine, Ruth Ann, and Robert Balis.

JAMES GRIGSBY (1829-before 1865) married Mary Ann Dunaway in 1853 in Anderson County. His twin, Benjamin, was listed in the first Texas census along with other family members, but we do not find him any later than that. He must have died soon after the family came to Texas. After James's death, Mary Ann married William Axum in 1865.

ROBERT HINDS GRIGSBY (1831-1875) married Augusta Eleanor Helm in Palestine, Anderson Co., Texas in 1865. He had served in Gould's Brigade in the Civil War. They had 6 children, 2 of whom died at an early age. They had a lovely 200 acre farm 5 miles NW of Palestine and the house is still standing on the property. He is buried at the place he designated on the farm and probably the two children are there, too, since there are two unmarked graves at the site. Augusta moved to Palestine and eventually her son, Robert Henderson Grigsby, and his wife lived at the farm.

DANIEL BRITT GRIGSBY (1840-1919) married (1) Nancy Cartwright, (2) Sallie Glover. He lived at Elkhart, Anderson Co., Texas, served in the Civil war with Robert H. Grigsby. He had one child by his first wife, nine by his second.

EMELINE GRIGSBY (1838-18) married L. B. Aspley. He was a farmer and they had two children.

Editor's Note: The Old City Park Museum of Cultural History in Dallas, Texas is located on the original John Grigsby grant. A descendant of his, Mrs. Mickey Wardlaw (Ruth) and her husband are co-sponsoring the kitchen in a restored log cabin as a memorial to the John Grigsby family. The kitchen will be used to demonstrate cooking methods used by settlers in the north central Texas area in the mid-1800's.

Margaret Mottley wishes to thank Camellia Denys, Gene Shoultz, and Monita Horn for their assistance in preparing this article.

COPY OF HEADRIGHT CERTIFICATE #34 - JOHN GRIGSBY

No. 34

This is to certify that John Grigsby Sr. has appeared before us a board of Land Commissioners for the county of Houston and proved acording (sic) to law that he arrived in this Republic Oct. 1834 and that he is a Married Man entitled to one League and Labor of Land upon the conditions of paying at the rate three dollars and fifty cents for evry Labor of Irrigable Land, two dollars & fifty cents for evry Labor of or Arable Land and one dollar and twenty cents for evry Labor of pasture land which may be contained in the survey secured to him in this certificate this the 19th day of January 1838.

Attest

Sam G. Wells Clerk

Stephen Box

E G_____

John Wertheim

COVER OF CERTIFICATE READS:

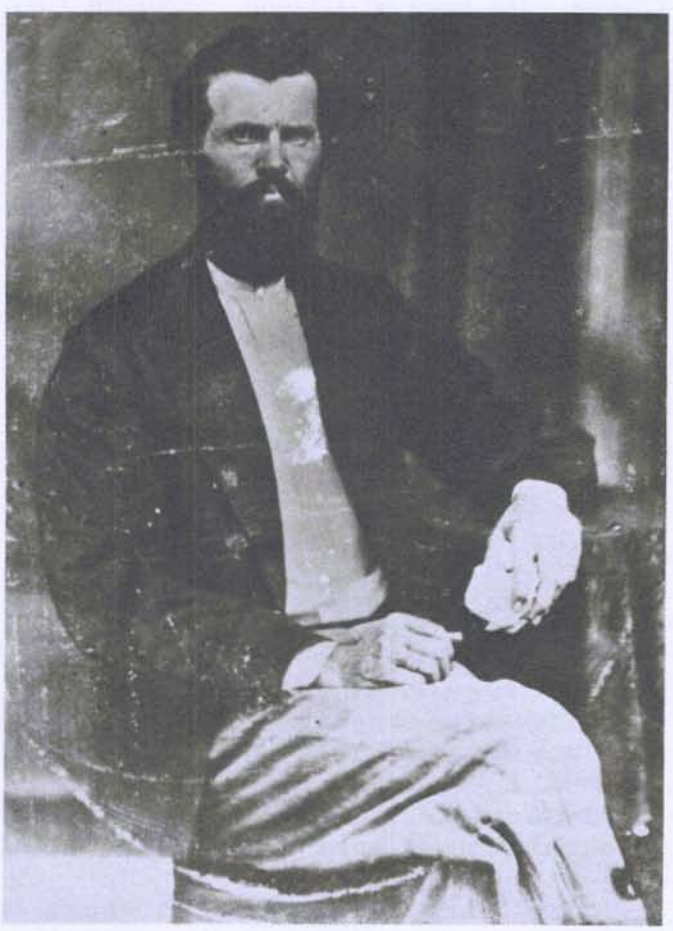
FILE 17C

Nacogdoches Co. 1st ____

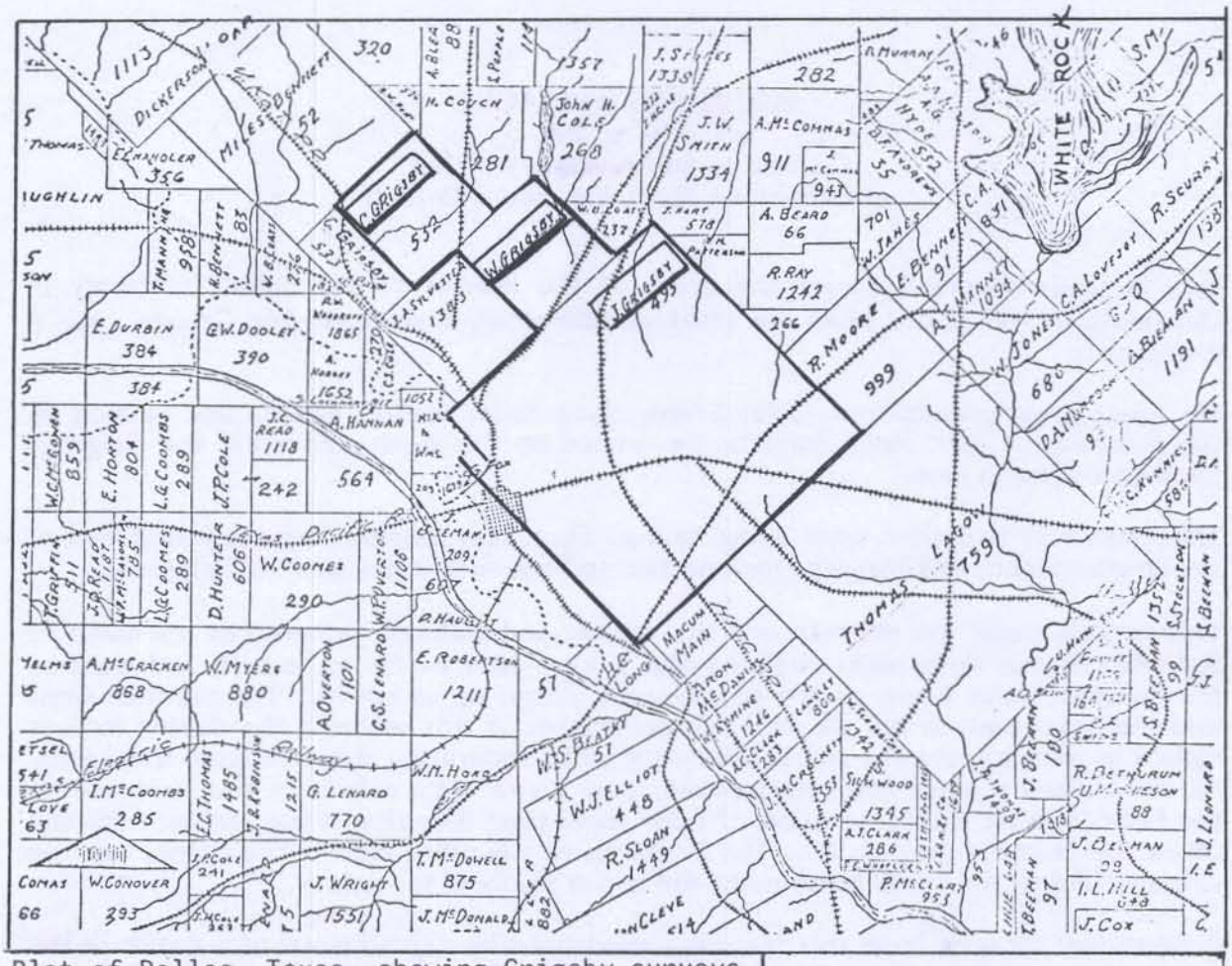
H R Certificate

No. 34

John Grigsby



(right) **Robert Hinds Grigsby**
Son of John Grigsby and his first wife, Hester Sharp



Plat of Dallas, Texas, showing Grigsby surveys

Home of Robert Hinds Grigsby, 5 miles N.W. of Palestine, Anderson County, Texas (1981)

THE EDENS MASSACRE

(as told to Jo Ann Dailey by her
grandmother, Ruth Ann Edens Dailey)

This incident occurred during the drive of the Indians to the Indian Territory in Oklahoma in the 1830's when my great-grandmother, then Ruth Ann Grigsby, was a young girl.

My great-great-grandfather, John Edens, came from South Carolina and settled on the San Pedro Creek, near Augusta; he settled on the south side while the Grigsbys lived on the north side.

The Indians at this time were being held at Fort Sam Houston, by the young men of the neighborhood; this fort was located two and one-half miles west of Palestine.

This certain night the old men and the women and children gathered at the home of John Edens; this same night twelve Indian braves escaped from the fort, and went to the home of John Edens as the people were preparing to retire. The old men went into the next room to bid the children goodnight; at this moment the twelve Indians rushed in with tomahawks and bloodthirsty yells, separating the men from their guns. As the Indians scalped and tomahawked, they threw the coals from the fireplace on the floor, setting the house afire. At the same time they ripped the feather beds and threw the feathers into the air. The Grigsbys, on the other side of the creek, saw the fire and fled to the creek bottom and hid in the thickets for safety.

A small boy escaped from this terrible catastrophe by climbing out of a crack in the loft. My great-great aunt Lucindy Madon fell out of the door, and though tomahawked eight times, managed to reach safety. She lived to a ripe old age.

Jo Ann Dailey

This story of the massacre was written by Jo Ann when she was a young girl. I have copied Jo Ann's story "as is", including spelling and punctuation.

The following article from the History of Houston Co., Texas, gives more names and details. The Ruth Ann Grigsby mentioned in this article was the daughter of "Dallas John" Grigsby (d. 1841) whose story is described in the "Gone To Texas" article.

Margaret Grigsby Mottley

HORRORS OF EDENS-MADDEN MASSACRE ARE TOLD BY HOUSTON COUNTIANS

(As related by R. B. Edens as told to him by his mother, Ruth Ann Grigsby)

"On the night of Oct. 18, 1838, a cold frosty night, the air was suddenly filled with the screams of women and children, and the war whoop of Indians on the warpath. This was heard by Ruth Ann Grigsby and her brother John, and quite a few women and children who had gathered into the Grigsby home for protection. The home of the Grigsbys was across the creek from the John Edens home. When Ruth Ann and those at the Grigsby home heard the Indians, they immediately fled for the creek bottom and the cover of timber. Some even went barefooted, and remained in the woods all night.

"On this memorable night, at the home of John Edens, there was gathered a bunch of women and children under the protection of four old men. These men stepped out for the women to retire. When the Indians, who were hidden near the house, saw the men leave, they rushed into the house thus, separating the men from their guns. The Indians began to tomahawk the women and set fire to everything. They did this by scattering coals of fire from the fireplace over everything in the room. The Indians ripped the feather beds and emptied the feathers into the air, thus adding to the confusion already established.

"Only two women escaped with their lives. One of these, Lucinda Madden, was badly wounded, and the Indians thought she was dead. She, however, managed to crawl across a fence where she was rescued by a negro woman, who dragged her to safety and put her to bed, administering to her wounds. One small boy, Balis Madden, also escaped by crawling through the crack in the logs and managed to reach the negro quarters and safety. John Edens rushed to the door during the fight and fired one shot into the room with an old horse pistol, and would have gone inside, had not the other men pulled him back. Thinking the women were all dead, they fled for safety. The 12 Indian braves returned to Fort Sam Houston within two and half miles of Palestine. The citizens were driving a band of Indians into the Indian territory when the 12 escaped. Among the volunteer soldiers was Balis Edens, father of R. B. Edens.

"John Edens, grandfather of R. B. is buried on a hill about two hundred yards from where the massacre occurred. Erected to his memory by R. B. Edens and Sister Ruth Ann Dailey is a concrete marker 3 by 4 by 7 foot."

* * * *

Further elaboration of the Eden-Madden Massacre, as taken from the Ruth Ann Grigsby account to her son R. B. Edens:

"The rest is largely conjecture, that is, some of it is. The main facts stand out like fire brands, and are known in history as the Edens Massacre.

"It is easy to see the men talking and smoking, taking their ease, talking politics, religion, crops, just the same then as today. They lounged about comfortably, their guns and ammunition handy.

"Over in the women's rooms, they were putting the little children to bed, each one busy talking or listening to the other. But there must have been an interval of quiet stillness as some of those little ones breathed their word of prayer. It may have been that the fathers came over to this room for a moment of prayer before they all retired for the night. We do not know just why the men came. It may have been to see a darling smiling in her sleep, for all of these people were as one great family, sharing their joys and sorrows always together. We don't know exactly what caused the men to come over to the door of the women's room for a moment unarmed. But we know that the moment was one of doom to all of them. For in that moment, Indians rushed in and about them, cutting the men off from their guns, and a season of hideous butchery began. The men fought as only men fight in such hours. They fought like savages, wild animals at bay. It was the hour when the Indian had his fill of blood, for the white people unarmed, outnumbered by droves, could only do their best and die.

"Negroes, true in this moment of despair, rushed in and saved the Madden and Eden's babies. Mrs. Madden's other two children were never seen or heard of after that night.

"Mrs. Edens and Mrs. Bob Madden attempted to escape. They succeeded in getting as far as the gate, when Mrs. Madden was shot dead, and Mrs. Edens was killed with a tomahawk. Mr. James Madden escaped from the house, the Indians in close pursuit. Over fences, trees, everything, he ran until he reached the creek. Into this he plunged and the Indians kept going down the banks. At last he dived and hid under a drift.

"When all were dead or had fled from the house, the Indians set it on fire, burning all the homes and improvements they could. Then, they fled.

"From the burning buildings Mrs. Madden crawled slowly. No doubt she fainted many times before she reached safety. But she did succeed in getting clear of the doomed house and hid in the underbrush until morning. Friends found her then and she lived to a good old age, dying in 1883.

"It is impossible to know just how many people perished that night, but there were many.

"Among present day descendants of those people, we will mention a few: Sheridans, McLeans and Maddens, all are well known people of Houston County. James W. Madden, well known Crockett lawyer, is the grandson of Mrs. James Madden who was so cruelly hacked to pieces and escaped miraculously from the burning house."

An impressive granite Marker stands on the site where the Massacre occurred, erected by the State of Texas in 1936. On the Marker is this inscription: "In a log cabin built here in 1832, by James Madden, seven white women and their children were killed by Indians in 1838 while their husbands were held captives in the adjoining cabin. Known as the Madden Massacre. Erected by the State in 1936."

In 1972, an official Texas Historical Marker corrected the information of the granite shaft and is located some half mile northwest of the original site atop one of the rolling hills in the Augusta Community. The Marker is one of four which relates the history of the area, the families who were the first permanent settlers and of the tragic Edens-Madden Massacre.

Near the original site, the Edens family Cemetery is located and here John Edens is buried. The St. Peters Creek was and has always been called Pedro Creek.

History of Houston County, Texas, 1687-1979. Compiled and edited by the History Book Committee of Houston County Historical Commission, Third Floor, Court House, Crockett, Texas. Heritage Publishing Company, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

* * *

Ruth Ann Grigsby (Edens) 1826-1884

As a 12 year old girl, she hid in the woods while the Indians attacked the Edens' home on the other side of the river. (Courtesy of Margaret G. Mottley)

Grigsby, Texas, The Santa Fe Depot and agent E. C. Fults

Grigsby, Texas, One of the first homes, built by W. M. McKinzie, ca. 1855

GRIGSBY, TEXAS

Written by Hulon Fults
Edited by Gene Shoultz

Grigsby is located in the southwest corner of Shelby County in East Texas, sixteen miles northwest of Nacogdoches, fourteen miles southwest of Center, and one mile east of the Attoyac River.

In the middle of the 19th century, a few families migrated to this heavily wooded area from Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee. Texas allowed them to homestead the land.

The early settlers worked together clearing land, building homes, and farming. The houses were mostly alike - a three room log house with a lean-to kitchen, a mud cat fireplace, a dog run, a small smokehouse in the back, and a shallow well in the front. The only literature in the house was the Bible and a mail order catalogue. Therefore most of their time was spent working, reading the Bible, and discussing what each had heard on their once a month trip to the county seat for supplies.

By 1895 there were about eighty families in the community, mostly small farmers and timber workers. They hauled timber by wagon to the nearest railroad, located in Timpson, Texas.

In 1898 a Mr. Grigsby, who was employed by the Santa Fe Railroad, started acquiring land for a right-of-way for a small tram railroad. He was alleged to have spent so much time wtih the natives while making preparations for the railroad that people bagan calling the community "Grigsby". This was in 1899. Until this time, all transactions were from Center, Texas or Timpson, Texas.

In 1901 William Yarbrough opened the first store in the community. In 1903 Dr. Jim Bailey opened a store and doctor's office; Rance Emmons built a store-Post Office combination and became the first Postmaster. His brother, Emmit Emmons, was the first mail carrier. (In 1916 E. C. Fultz became the new mail carrier.) In 1907 a depot was built and Rance Emmons became the first agent. In 1912 a school-church combination was built, known as White Rock.

Recreation consisted of log rollings, camp meetings, and Saturday night dances with an occasional tent show. About once a year they would have a box supper to raise enough money to hire a once-a-month preacher and a one-week singing school teacher.

In 1917 industry came to Grigsby. Fred Buckner started a "pecker-wood" saw mill, employing ten or twelve men.

In 1918 the men began returning from war. With little else to do, many began boot-legging and small-time gambling. These activities caused much dissention, fighting, stabbings, and at least five killings. The small town gained a very bad reputation and people refused to move there. They even cautioned their children to

never go near the town. Travellers hurried through, and blacks would go around, rather than through the place. Therefore, as the older settlers began to die, there were only their decendants to carry on.

The K.K.K. was fairly active. They did more good than harm, helping the poor, and trying to control the worst elements as some of the county law were reluctant to go there -- especially back in the whiskey still areas. These conditions prevailed for the following eight years.

In 1927 Grigsby was at its peak. It had five grocery stores, a depot, Post Office, feedstore, doctor's office, mail route, and garage. Lou Fults ran a small cafe, the Tomlin brothers ran a "Jitney" from Center to Nacagdoches, and there were two one-day-a-week barbers. Jim Danley looked after the one telephone line.

One midnight in 1930 the school burned. The students attended school in the church until they could transfer to a nearby school. A great many of them dropped out. In October, 1933 the train made its last one-day run to Grigsby, thus starting the little village on its way out. In 1936 the Post Office closed. In 1946 the original and only store building left standing closed. In 1950 the Grigsby Highway signs were removed and the name gradually disappeared from the road maps. The 1981 Center phone directory listed nine residential phones in Grigsby.

Most of the people that saw the beginning of Grigsby were a close-knit group. They were always willing to divide with the less fortunate and pitch in a couple of days labor to get a neighbor "out of the grass".

During the depression the older men would come to town and sit on the store benches, whittling, chewing tobacco, solving local and world problems, and arguing, mostly the Bible. They were very honorable old people and proud of their heritage. In fact, they were kings in their own right, using their benches as their thrones.

They are all gone now . . . along with the blacksmiths, hitching posts, and gristmills. I, along with many others, miss them.

Hulon Fults
Born: Grigsby, Texas, 1916
Present Address: 217 Elm
Nacogdoches, Texas 75961

(The courthouse in Center burned in 1882, making it difficult to be exact about some of the names and dates. It is a fact that Mr. Grigsby never lived in Grigsby, Texas.)

WILLIAM ALEXANDER ANDERSON WALLACE ("BIG FOOT" OF TEXAS)

by
Sarah Frances (Anderson) Suter
assisted by Beverly W. Suter

A picture which hangs in the Court House of Rockbridge County, Virginia, in Lexington, is that of William A.A. Wallace. The picture was presented by Mr. GHB Wallace of Waynesboro, Virginia in 1935. A monument to W.A.A. Wallace stands on South Main Street in Lexington, across from the Mayflower Hotel-Apartments. The inscription reads:

> William Alexander Wallace was born one mile south of this marker, in a brick house, still standing, which was near the dwelling of his grandfather, Samuel Wallace, where the first Rockbridge County Court was held in 1778. At the age of twenty he went to Texas to avenge the death of a brother who was massacred by the Mexicans at Goliad. He served his adopted state as Indian Fighter, Ranger, Soldier, and Post Carrier, enduring great ordeals recorded in history. His remains are interred in the State Cemetery in Austin and the State of Texas has signally honored his memory. Wallace motto - "Sperandum Est". Erected by his Virginia and Texas Admirers, 1935.

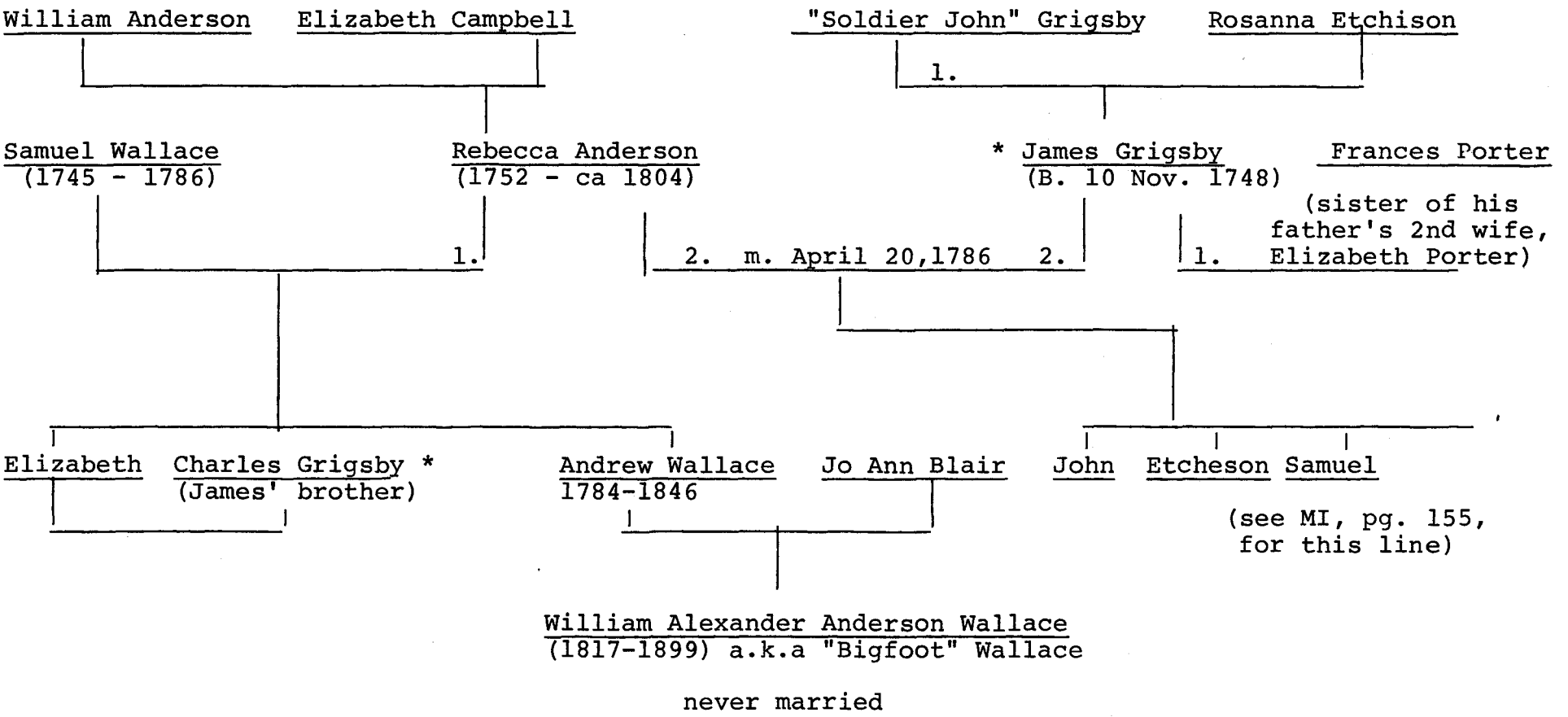
With this as prologue, we begin our story:

William Alexander Anderson Wallace was born April 13, 1817, at Thorn Hill Plantation, the Wallace ancestral home, which is now South Lexington, Rockbridge County, Virginia. A son of Andrew and Jane (Blair) Wallace, whose home was blessed with three daughters: Rebecca, Elizabeth and Martha, and six sons: Samuel, James, Joseph, Andrew, Alexander, and William Alexander Anderson Wallace. William was the smallest of the Wallace brothers, standing at maturity 6'2" and weighing 240 pounds. William came of fightng blood. The Wallace Clan had migrated to Rockbridge County from Scotland, through Ireland, and were known as the "Fighting Wallaces". William's grandfather, Samuel Wallace, took part in the French and Indian War, and the American Revolution. In the latter conflict, three of Samuel's brothers paid the supreme price.

It wasn't until after the War of 1812 that life became quiet and peaceful in Rockbridge County, and depredations by the Indians were not being experienced so often. But there was trouble in the new territory of Texas. Various men had gone there from Rockbridge County, among them Sam Houston, of Tennessee fame. (Sam was born in Rockbridge near Timber Ridge Church.) In 1835, Samuel Wallace, brother of our subject, and a cousin, William Wallace, joined the Georgia Battalion, a band of American volunteers, to fight in Texas' revolution against Mexico. This battalion was commanded by Major Benjamin Wallace, a distant relative of the Wallace boys.

Editor's Note: The above article is courtesy of the William Anderson Association and appeared in their August, 1982 Bulletin.

The Grigsby Connection With "Bigfoot" Wallace



(With thanks to Janet Pursley of Dallas, Texas + Polly Donnelly of Cleveland, Tenn. for information on this chart. EMN)

On Easter Sunday, 1836, these three Wallace men, and another by the name of Wallace, were captured by the Mexicans at Goliad. They were ordered to lay down their arms - and then were murdered by the Mexicans. Virginia blood under the mesquite and live oaks of Texas called for retaliation. If it had not been for this, William A.A. Wallace might have remained the rest of his life in Rockbridge County, where he was so comfortably situated. But when the tall, powerful lad of nineteen, with dark eyes and black curly hair, learned the circumstances of the deaths of his relatives, he came, in his uncomplicated way, to a straight-forward decision: he would replace his kinsmen in Texas. "I aim" he expalined, "to spend the balance of my days killing Mexicans", and eventually was to fulfill that vow.

Following the battle at Goliad, the Alamo at San Antonio was captured by the Mexican general, Antonio Santa Anna's forces in 1836, after 13 days of fighting. No Texans were permitted to survive, and among those killed were the legendary scouts, Davy Crockett and James Bowie. A month after the Alamo fell, Santa Anna was defeated at the Battle of San Jacinto by Sam Houston's forces, and Texas eventually won independence and became the Republic of Texas.

The following Fall, 1837, William Alexander Anderson Wallace, with an uncle, J. Blair, and two other men, James Paxton and Franklin Shields, left their homes to go to Texas. They traveled on foot by way of White Sulphur Springs, Lewisburg, and Charleston; then along the New and Kanawha Rivers. They followed the Ohio River to Cincinnati, where they took a steam boat to New Orleans, then on to Galveston, Texas.

John P. Wallace, a great-great-nephew of W.A.A Wallace, has two letters written by William to his father, describing the trip west. The first, dated October 21, 1837, tells of their trip up to this point. "I have seen steamboats, saltworks, burning springs, and other curiosities on the road, but the steamboat is the greatest of them all. Give my best respects to all relatives, brothers and sisters, and all inquiring friends, and accept of them yourself. Willam A.A. Wallace". The second letter, dated December 26, 1837, reads: "Dear Father. I arrived in Galveston the 20th of November in good health and also Uncle J. Blair, J. Paxton and F. Shields. We had a very unpleasant time crossing the Gulf of Mexico on the schooner Diadem. A storm whipped up soon and many people got sick. We anchored off Galveston on Nov. 19th and such a sight I never saw, the soldiers of Texas dying on the island and never buried, which I saw myself, left for the buzzards and mosquitos. I am pleased with the land but nothing else. Texas is most unhealthy and the water unfit to drink. Many people are sick, wanting to go back to the States. Uncle J. Blair is leaving for New Orleans at once. Out of the 160 persons who came to Texas when we did, all but ten or twelve became disgusted and returned to the States. J. Paxton and myself will return if not killed by the Mexicans. I would not stay if all my relatives were here. I beg of you never to come to Texas. I would rather see a sister of mine in the grave than in Texas. Adieu. William A.A. Wallace".

Although his first impression of Texas wasn't so good, he learned to love his adopted State and served it well. All was then quiet along the border, and the civil authorities of the Republic of Texas were resolved to keep it so unless Mexico reopened the contest. The sparseness of the American population and the paucity of the military resources precluded any other policy. Wallace then had to find some occupation other than soldiering. He obtained a land grant of 640 acres near La Grange where he farmed for some time before he decided that farming wasn't for him.

Not only did he have the Mexicans to contend with, but parts of Texas were infested with barbarous Indians. He moved out to the open range, built himself a cabin, and found the hunting so excellent that he could bring down game with his rifle without going farther than his door. He killed his first bear in Texas. Wallace preferred the Indians, because they were hospitable, to the Mexicans, who were treacherous. He was continuously chasing the Indians, making treaties with them and seeing that they kept them. Life was not dull, but if it was to be maintained at all, it would be essential occasionally to slay a marauding Comanche or Waco Indian.

In 1840 Wallace moved to San Antonio and engaged in the logging business. But Indian fighting soon evolved into an organized business, and this gave birth to the subsequently renowned Texas Rangers. In order to put his rapidly maturing talents with rifle, pistol and bowie knife to best use, Wallace enlisted as a private in a Ranger company, commanded by John C. Hays. In 1842, the Mexicans, under General Woll, captured San Antonio.

Wallace volunteered in the futile Meir expedition, which ended in his capture, imprisonment and ill-treatment by his captors. It was while Wallace was prisoner in the City of Mexico that he acquired the name of "Big Foot". Some foreigners in the city noted that the American prisoners were shoeless and made contributions to purchase a pair of shoes for each of them. Everyone was fitted with a suitable pair of shoes except Wallace, who wore size twelve. Unable to find shoes to fit him, he bought leather and had a pair of shoes made by a zapatero. From that time on, he was known as "Big Foot". (There are at least two other versions of how he received his nickname.)

In 1845 he returned to the banks of the Medina River, built a cabin, and again tried farming - with little success. He was cut out to hunt and fish and kill Indians and Mexicans . . . and so he did. In 1846 he returned to the Rangers, rising from sergeant to first lieutenant just in time to participate in the war that broke out between the United States and Mexico. He enlisted in Col. John Hays' command. His regiment, the Texas Mounted Rifle Volunteers, was attached to Zachary Taylor's army.

After the American victory, he returned to his cabin on the Medina, to find that the white settlement was pushing ever more powerfully westward and was arousing the Comanches and Wacos to fresh raids and barbarities. He continued as scout and guide, to alleviate this desperate situation. In 1850, Wallace was designated by Governor Bell to raise a company of volunteers for the protection of the frontier. He contracted to drive the stage coach and carry the mail over 600 miles of Apache country between San Antonio and El Paso, which he did for many years.

In 1859, Wallace visited his old home in Virginia. He had received a letter from relatives, advising him to come at once, as his presence was necessary in the division of an estate, of which he was one of the heirs. He decided to visit his old home, and went about it as though he was planning a campaign. He bought store clothes, in which he felt quite ill-at-ease, and practiced diligently the civilized arts, in which he had been well-schooled during his youth. He traveled by steamboat from New Orleans, up the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers to Wheeling, Virginia (now West Virginia), then entrained for Richmond, via Baltimore - his first train ride - and on to Lexington. His family and friends were very hospitable, but very curious about his stories of life in Texas. While on his visit home, he told relatives that he wouldn't

trade Texas for the whole shooting match (of them). He felt they looked down on him as a sort of half-civilized savage that could never be entirely tamed - and perhaps they were right. He had lived too long the free and indpendent life.

Wallace returned to Texas, which had joined the Confederate States of America in 1861. This time Wallace did not fight. He could not see the use of war within a nation. He thought it useless. He remained in Texas, protecting the families of fighting men, both Union and Confederate. In the years after the war, he saw thousands of long-horn cattle driven northward over the Chisholm trail to Dodge City, Kansas, and other points, to be shipped to Eastern markets.

In 1870, with Texas re-admitted to the Union, Wallace returned to living the life of a hermit, in his almost-unfurnished cabin - raising cattle and horses, hunting, fishing, and doing a little farming. About this point, the State of Texas honored him by giving him a little chunk of ranchland in the Medina River valley, in Frio county, near San Antonio. So many settlers had come in and fenced in the prairie that the Indians would not venture there. Wallace did not like being fenced up - he liked plenty of room and outlet. He delighted in entertaining his many friends with interesting accounts of his life. Some of these tales he called "whoppers". His accomodating nature made it easy for him to make friends. Thus he kept the legends of Texas alive.

Now that there was no danger of attacks from the Indians, "Big Foot" Wallace could look back and see the whole pattern of his life. His part in building Texas had been a satisfying one. Maybe his name would go down in history. His life had been packed with excitement and vigorous frontier living. He, Big Foot, and the daring Texas Rangers had made Texas a place where men could rear families and build schools and churches.

On January 7, 1899, William Alexander Anderson (Big Foot) Wallace died - just short of his eighty-second birthday, at the home of friends, Judge and Mrs. John S. Thomas, near Devine, Texas, and was buried, in the nearby cemetery. At the next session of the Texas Legislature, a bill was introduced providing that the remains of this great Texas Ranger be buried fittingly in the State cemetery in Austin, capital of Texas. The provision was carried out, and on his tombstone is this simple epitaph, which he would probably approve and enjoy:

Big Foot Wallace
To the Ranger who spent his manhood defending the home of Texas
Brave Honest Faithful
Born April 13, 1817
Died January 7, 1899

William A.A. William is quoted as saying: "I would rather be called 'Big Foot' Wallace than 'Lying Wallace' or 'Thieving Wallace'. Such handles to my name would not be agreeable". He may be known to the world as "Big Foot" Wallace, but he will ever be esteemed in Texas as William A. Wallace, Scout, Ranger, Soldier under three flags, Virginia gentleman, frontiersman - always, even to the end, a fine storyteller, great fighter, remarkable tracker, man of iron courage and will, and an honest man of character.

* * *

Sources for this story are:
The Wallace Family by George S. Wallace, published by the Michie Co., 1927
History of Rockbridge County by McClung. . .contains several articles
Big Foot Wallace by John C. Duval (who served in the Texas Rangers with Big Foot and wrote the story while Wallace was still living)
Big Foot Wallace of the Texas Rangers by Shannon Garst, illustrated by Lee Ames
The Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish by Chalkey, vols II and III for specific records

The Williams Anderson Family Association
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"Bigfoot" Wallace c. 1885
While he was back in his native Rockbridge County, Wallace posed for the famous photographer, Michael Miley. (Photograph courtesy of the Va. Historical Society, as published in Fishwick's book, ***General Lee's Photographer, the Life and Work of Michael Miley.***)